

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
HST 850 Jefferson City, MO
www.mmpec.ded.mo.gov

Members in Attendance: Chairman Dalton Wright, Vice Chairman Representative David Pearce (during the lunch hour), Senator Bill Stouffer, Robert Welling, and Representative Terry Witte

Members in Attendance Conference Call: Jeff Bloemker and Kent Thomas

Members Absent: Senator Frank Barnitz

Guests in Attendance: Jim Brentlinger, Department of Revenue; Representative David Day, Missouri House of Representatives; Hal Dulle, Missouri Veterans Commission; Pat Kerr, Missouri Veterans Commission; Matt Michelson, Senator Stouffer's Office; George Newell, Missouri Association of Veteran Organizations; Bill Rupp, Missouri Association of Veteran Organizations; Allen Stark, Missouri National Guard; Mike Woolbright, Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration; Dawn Busick, Department of Economic Development-Division of Workforce Development; Rhonda Meyer, Department of Economic Development; Kevin Stover, Department of Economic Development; Bill McCoy, Department of Economic Development; and Krista Zurkamer, Department of Economic Development

Chairman Dalton Wright called the MMPEC February 20, 2008 meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. Chairman Wright welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all in attendance for their support.

The Commission members, supporting staff and guests made introductions.

Military Predatory Insurance, Mike Woolbright

A recent trend being seen across the nation is military insurance sale practice reform. Most recently in 2004 due to a multi-state collaboration there has been a settlement agreement of \$70 million with American Amicable for consumers who were sold false insurance claims. This agreement spans across 40 states with approximately 57,000 service members involved. One of the difficulties currently is the lack of adequate information on addresses for these service members. Many can not be found in order to deliver their share of the settlement. There is a five year working window from 2006 to deliver the settlement otherwise the money will go back into the state. *Bear Facts* was mentioned as a possible resource to be utilized by the Department in finding the accurate contact information for the individuals receiving a settlement payment. The Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration recently filed rules following suit of the national trend to stop predatory and abusive sales of life insurance products to the state's active military personnel.

The department anticipates the rules will become effective by May 2008. The following sales practices are prohibited under the proposed rules:

- Soliciting service members in a group meeting that is mandatory.
- Knowingly making appointments with service members during their normally scheduled duty hours or in places not approved by the installation commander.
- Misleading use of military direct deposit devices for the purchase of life insurance.
- Using military personnel as representatives to sell life insurance to subordinates.
- Misrepresenting life insurance products as being endorsed by the U.S. military.
- Selling a life insurance product that does not cover a loss or death in the line of duty.
- Recommending any life insurance product, unless it is suitable for the particular needs of the service member.

Chairman Wright thanked Mr. Woolbright for his report to the Commission and looks forward to hearing updates on the search for the military members involved in the multi-state settlement.

On-Line Revenue Filing Form for Military, Jim Brentlinger

Last winter the MMPEC received a comment at the Whiteman Air Force Base town hall meeting about the tax paperwork to be completed by military personnel stationed in Missouri. Bill McCoy has been working with Jim Brentlinger and the Department of Revenue analyzing this comment and coming up with possible solutions. A new initiative has been launched by the Department of Revenue that will make it easier for military personnel to remain in compliance with Missouri tax laws. Military personnel stationed in Missouri are able to electronically notify the department when a Missouri individual income tax return is not required. The Service Members Civil Relief Act prevents military personnel from being taxed on military income by any state other than their home of record state. The new on-line form is an easy way for military members and their families to notify the department when a Missouri individual income tax return is not required for a particular tax year. The convenient form has been available since January 2008 and can be found on the department's web page at <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/personal/military/index.htm>. This on-line form can be used for tax years 2007 and forward. The form should be submitted to the department by the return's due date, a return's due date is normally April 15, following the close of the taxable year. Submitting this online form timely should prevent the department from sending a "Request for Tax Return" notice to a military individual.

Chairman Wright and the Commission commended Mr. Brentlinger and the Department of Revenue for their hard work and reiterated what a benefit this will be for our Missouri service members. Chairman Wright asked Ms. Zurkamer to add a link on the

Commission's website to this form. Again, Chairman Wright thanked Mr. Brentlinger for his work on the on-line form.

Legislative Report, Interstate Compact, Representative David Day

Chairman Wright commended Representative Day for representing Missouri magnificently in New Orleans and thanked him for all his support of the military men and women in Missouri .

Representative Day introduced to the Commission the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children legislation. The bill authorizes Missouri to enter into the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and establishes the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The compact becomes effective upon its adoption by 10 states. Military children include the kindergarten through twelfth-grade children of active duty members of the armed services including the National Guard and the reserve, as well as the children of members who die while on active duty, retire, or are medically discharged, for a period of one year afterward.

The compact covers issues including facilitation of enrollment, both in classes and extracurricular activities; placement; graduation; and information-sharing. The commission is made up of one voting member from each participating state. The duties of the commission include dispute resolution between member states, enforcing the rules of the commission, and providing training and other administrative functions. The bill contains provisions for the formation of the commission's executive committee and other aspects such as its budget, liability, and legal status.

Martin Dempsey, our state liaison, came to Missouri for the Committee hearing on the bill to show his support. Robert Welling added that Mr. Dempsey had very nice comments about Representatives Day, Pearce and Witte and commended Missouri for being one of the first states to introduce the legislation.

Representative Day reported the bill passed in Special Committee on Veterans. Chairman Wright thanked Representative Day again for all his work and commended him on all the support received from other legislators and his co-sponsors.

Representative David Pearce reported that the MMPEC bill sponsored by himself and Representative Witte has been filed and read two times and is hoping the bill will be assigned to Special Committee on Veterans as well.

Chairman Wright called for a lunch break at 11:50 a.m.

MMPEC meeting resumed at 12:30 p.m.

The minutes from the November 7, 2007 meeting were introduced and reviewed. Chairman Dalton Wright called for additions and/or corrections to the minutes.

With no said corrections Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve said minutes.

Kent Thomas moved, Robert Welling seconded the motion to accept the November 7, 2007 minutes. All approved, motion carried.

Robert Welling reported that Brigadier General Garrett Harencak has appointed his wife, Tanya Harencak, as the new liaison from Whiteman Air Force Base to the MMPEC. Mr. Welling submitted to the Commission a brief bio on Ms. Harencak.

Robert Welling moved that the MMPEC officially accept Tanya Harencak as the new liaison from the Whiteman Air Force Base to this Commission to serve until such time as her successor is named and appointed. Kent Thomas seconded the motion to accept Ms. Harencak as the Whiteman Liaison. All approved, motion carried.

DED Guard at Home Program, Dawn Busick

The Guard at Home program was created to assist the spouses of Missouri Guard and Reserve members who have been activated in defense of our country, and to assist those troops upon their return home. This program addresses immediate financial needs during deployment. It builds a path to employment for spouses while the primary income earner is on active duty deployment. This program also assists returning troops who need to rebuild their businesses, or whose jobs have been eliminated during deployment.

The Guard at Home program has been active since August 2006 and has been allocated \$350,000 in federal funding. A problem facing the program is the 45 day window returning soldiers have to activate the program and initiate the funds. Each soldier is briefed on the services of the Guard at Home program upon their return but most are not in the mindset to participate.

With the assistance of Representative David Pearce, Representative Terry Witte and Senator Bill Stouffer the Department is proposing changes to the current statute that would make the program more effective. We are proposing that we change the title of the program from “Guard at Home” to “Hero at Home”. Also in the amendments is the extension of the program from 45 days after discharge from deployment to one year.

Pat Kerr added how important this program is to the state of Missouri and the military members and their families. The extension of time for the program is something that is needed and will help to create awareness. In many cases the spouses are not aware of the money existing out there to assist them. Ms. Busick and Ms. Kerr both agreed the importance of intra-agency partnership.

Ms. Busick added that it is the hope of the Department that this new language will assist in making this program successful for the military members and their families in Missouri. Chairman Wright thanked Ms. Busick for her participation today.

Missouri Veterans Commission, Hal Dulle

Sales Tax For Veteran Services

Hal Dulle introduced to the Commission pending bill HJR 71 that would create a sales tax to support veteran services. Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment authorizes a dedicated sales tax of one-eighth of 1% for funding veterans' homes, services, and programs. The tax would become effective January 1, 2009, and terminate on December 31, 2016, unless reauthorized by the voters. If reauthorized, the tax will be reduced to one-tenth of 1%. The sales tax must be reauthorized by the voters every 10 years.

The bill also establishes the Missouri Veterans' Commission within the Department of Public Safety consisting of nine members, five of whom will be veterans appointed by the Governor. The other four will be members from the General Assembly, two from the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker, and two from the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tem, each serving a single two-year term.

There is a solemn obligation to meet the needs of our veterans by providing the services they deserve. With all the deployments, the high number of seriously injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and an aging Vietnam Veteran population, the Missouri Veterans' Commission needs increased funding to provide the necessary services to these veterans. A dedicated funding source established by a sales tax will provide the needed funding instead of relying on moneys from gaming boat admissions and general revenue.

There is a federal block grant program available to assist Missouri with some of the costs associated with the increase in services but this is a match program and this sales tax would supply the state with matching funds. There is a cap on this federal grant program each year and there currently is a procession of applications.

Pat Kerr thanked the Commission for the mention in their 2008 Annual Report about the Power of 11 ¢ program, Family Relief Fund. Ms. Kerr also passed out some recent enhancements in the Veteran's eligibility for health care benefits. VA implemented certain provisions of Public Law that extended health benefits for recently discharged veterans who served in the theater of combat operations and extended the timeframe certain veterans have for applying for the provisions of a one-time course of dental benefits. Ms. Kerr gave a Fact Sheet to everyone on the VA health care "Beneficiary Travel Benefits", "Combat Veteran Eligibility" and "Outpatient Dental Treatment". Ms. Kerr also commented on some of the great work the MVC and the Department of Mental Health are doing with the soldiers affected by traumatic brain injury. There are some great family programs in play currently that are providing some great services. Also, we are working with the law enforcement to educate them on the mental troubles of our service men and woman by creating the wounded star license plate.

Chairman Wright thanked both Hal Dulle and Pat Kerr for their reports and commended both on their dedication and hard work. Chairman Wright also acknowledged Kevin Stover for his contributions to the Commission and all the work he has completed alongside the Commission. You will be missed on the Commission.

Kevin Stover thanked Chairman Wright and the Commission for their sentiments and enjoyed his time with the Commission. He added that he would always support the military in Missouri especially with a former Marine as a wife.

Chairman Wright reminded the Commission of their next meeting on April 2, 2008. With no further business he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Senator Bill Stouffer moved, Robert Welling seconded the motion to adjourn the February 20, 2008 MMPEC meeting. All approved, motion carried.

With no further business Chairman Dalton Wright adjourned the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

Minutes Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dalton L. Wright", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dalton Wright, Chair

2-April-2008
Date